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AUTHORITY

AGO, d/a ltr, 11 jun 1980

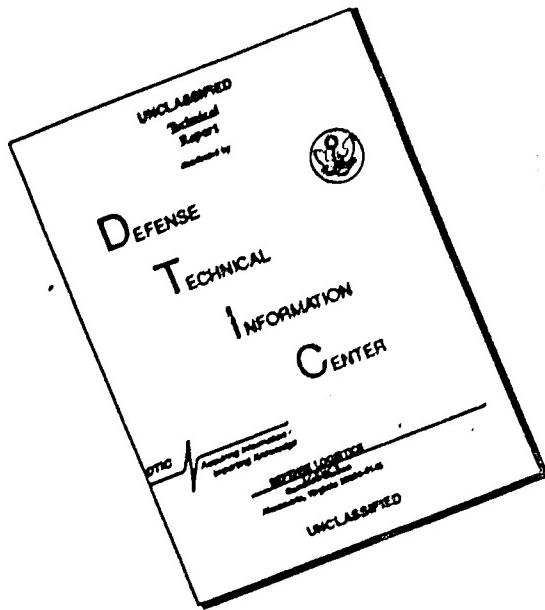
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (29 Jan 73) DAFD-OTT

8 February 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Colonel John P. King,
Province Senior Advisor, An Xuyen Province, 12 Jun 71 - 12 Jan 73

SEE DISTRIBUTION

- AD 907305
1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Report (U), 2 July 1971.
 2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Colonel John P. King, subject as above.
 3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
 4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 525-14, as a result of subject report should be provided to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, ATTN: DAFD-OTT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

1 Incl
as

Verne L. Bowers
VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

D D C A

REF ID: A621160
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HEADQUARTERS
ADVISORY TEAM 30, (AN XUYEN PROVINCE)
DELTA REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
APO 96215

MACIR-80

1 January 1973

SUBJECT: AFRIIS-Province Senior Advisor Completion of Tour Report (ECS:
MCCCO DS 174-03) Colonel John P. King, 255-30-9101

THEU: DEPCORDS
Delta Regional Assistance Command
APO 96215

TO: COMUSMACV
ATTN: MCCORDS (Cofs, CORDS)
APO 96222

1. Attached is my End of Tour report for the period 12 June 1971 to 12 January 1973.

2. My nineteen months as the Province Senior Advisor of An Xuyen has been one of the finest tours of my Army career. This is not to say that all of my endeavors were productive or will have a lasting impact on the Vietnamese, but it was rewarding, in part due to those successes and accomplishments that I did enjoy that were a direct result of activities of my staff of selected, highly qualified individuals from State, AID and the Military. I would expect to see some of the former two agencies in high diplomatic posts. Several of the latter are U.S. Army Chief of Staff material. In addition, I found it self-satisfying and enlightening to be responsible for the total advisory effort centered around Territorial Defense, Local Government and Local Development. It was equally pleasing to work closely with many of the Vietnamese officials in these program areas. All of the aforementioned has been made possible by the CORDS concept. It is my opinion that this concept has brought about unity of command, inter-agency cooperation and emphasis on mission accomplishment among American organizations that did not exist in Vietnam during my tour in 1966, nor to my knowledge, anywhere else. I have the greatest confidence in the CORDS concept and I wholeheartedly recommend that it be implemented in any country within which we are heavily involved in political and economical development or military and economical assistance.

3. The presentation which follows paints a somewhat gloomy picture in nearly every developmental and security area. In comparing the programs with

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1 January 1973

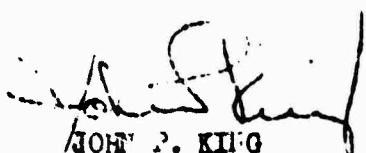
SUBJECT: AFMIS-Province Senior Advisor Completion of Tour Report (RCS:
MACJORDS 174-03) Colonel John P. King, 255-30-9101

those in many of the more pacified provinces, the future does appear grim. However, when viewed in the light of the stagnation which existed fourteen or fifteen months ago, interjecting the hard work, the vigor and spirit, the inspiration of the present Province Chief, his untiring battle, slow as it is, against lethargy and inefficiency, and considering that during the last few months improvement was reflected in nearly every program, there is a great deal of hope for progress and prosperity in the province. Several real signs of the tenacity of the people already exist. They continue to put great sums of money in the local banks-they continue to build-new homes, new commercial ventures, new plans for expansion of existing industry. There is in fact, no sign anywhere now that the people of An Xuyen would be satisfied to stagnate or to wither away at the end of the vine. With additional forces of the 32d Infantry Regiment now assigned to the province, there is a great probability that the GVN will be able during a contested cease-fire, to maintain control of the majority of the population and terrain presently under their control. Introduction of additional NVA forces would, of course, negate this probability.

4. I have but one recommendation for those who follow me. Upgrading of quality in all areas, civil and military, through continuous training, must be accomplished on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis, and never be allowed to lag or to stop. Without this continuous quality improvement, the small successes the Vietnamese have enjoyed will sink back into the dark marshes of poorness and ignorance, upon which Communism thrives and grows.

1 Incl

as


JOHN P. KING
COL, E F
Province Senior Advisor

SECTION I

NAME: John P. King

GRADE: Colonel

[PII Redacted]

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Infantry

PROVINCE: An Xuyen

INCLUSIVE DATES OF TOUR: 12 June 1971 to 9 January 1973

EXPECTED REASSIGNMENT DATE: 9 January 1973

PREVIOUS TOUR IN VIETNAM: June 1966 to June 1967

ASSIGNMENT OF PREVIOUS VIETNAM TOUR: 1st Infantry Division - 4 months
HQ USAID (IG) - 8 months

SECTION II

1. What background did you have for your position?

20 years military service, attended several military service schools which included the Commanding General Staff College and a previous tour in Vietnam.

2. What training did you have for this position?

Nine months of area studies and language training at the Foreign Service Institute.

3. What additional training would you suggest for your position?

None. It is recommended, however, that each Province Senior Advisor (PSA), visit two other military regions for DEPCORDS briefings and one province level briefing. This would be in addition to visiting provinces adjacent to the PSA's assigned province as is currently done in Military Region IV.

4. What should be the length of tour for your position?

Eighteen months.

5. Was support from region and/or Saigon Headquarters satisfactory? If not, specify deficiencies.

Support was satisfactory except in the area of motion pictures. Projector repair and replacement was unsatisfactory.

6. Were there any programs delayed because support was not forthcoming? Were there any programs that were especially successful because support was readily available? Which ones?

Program success was nominal in most areas. The Phung Hoang, Public Safety and Social Welfare programs were failures when considering the inordinately high support in funds and manpower from U.S. and Vietnamese sources.

7. Do the reporting requirements as set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 provide means for reporting all information of present and future value? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Yes.

8. Do MACCO MIS Management Information System Field Reporting Requirements set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 adequately measure progress in pacification programs?

Yes.

SECTION II (Cont)

9. Were instructions from higher headquarters clear with no conflicting requirements? If not, what specific instances occurred where conflicting instructions were received?

Instructions from higher headquarters were usually clear. However, there were often duplications of reports through U.S. and Vietnamese channels. In many cases, it appeared that Report Control Symbols (RCS) were assigned for obtaining information that was already available at Region and Saigon level as a result of Vietnamese reports. This merely resulted in a duplication of effort at the province level. An example of such a report is the Critical Items Shortage Report (RCS Number MACDR-CR-TFD-BM 50.72). In addition, the time allocated for provinces to meet RCS suspense dates to higher headquarters was often unusually short. Short fuse reporting only results in erroneous data, half truths and lack of coordination with Vietnamese counterparts. The 1973 Community Defense and Local Development Planning Cycle Report (MACDR-CR-PPR-01-62.72) requirement arrived at province on 19 October with a suspense date of 25 October to Region and 30 October to Saigon. Six days is hardly sufficient time to prepare sound recommendations for changes in concept and detail for future years' activities in all program areas.

10. The most clearly defined and directed programs are:

- a. RF/PF.
- b. LTT.
- c. Village Self Sufficiency and Taxation.

11. The most effective paramilitary forces are: None

12. The most successful pacification programs are:

- a. LTT.
- b. ADB.

13. The programs that have the greatest impact upon the pacification effort are:

- a. Territorial Security.
- b. LTT - Added prosperity.
- c. Education.

14. The least successful pacification programs are:

- a. Social Welfare.

SECTION II (Cont)

- b. Protection of People Against Terrorism.
 - c. Public Health.
15. The programs that have the least impact upon the pacification effort are:
- a. Youth.
 - b. Peoples Organizations:
16. The rural people (are) (are not) aware of the pacification efforts the GVN and US are making. If not, how can they be informed?
- The rural people are aware of the pacification effort of the GVN. However, a recent survey indicated that 5% of the population is unaware of U.S. support and 31% felt our support is insufficient.
17. The people, as you know them, are (more) committed to the GVN than when you assumed your job. Why?
- In my opinion, the populace is more committed to the GVN than when I arrived at post. This stems from the fact that the GVN is beginning to respond to the needs and grievances of the people. However, administrative red tape and corruption still remain as primary factors preventing more positive results.
18. Do you feel that the pacification plan is sufficiently detailed to provide guidance and set goals that will result in security and growth of Vietnam?
- Yes.
19. Do you feel the pacification was adequately communicated and explained to you and your counterpart?
- No. The plan arrived piecemeal from higher headquarters which made coordination at this level impossible. The short suspension date also precluded indepth planning and inter-agency cooperation.

SECTION II.

TERRITORIAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE

RF/PF: Regional Force units have generally performed well whereas Popular Force units have had a history of overruns and abandonment of operating bases under pressure. There are currently 35 RF companies authorized and it would require at least 40 additional companies to effectively secure the remote populated areas. In the event of a cease-fire, it is most likely that the GVN will only control ten of its 23 villages. This is due primarily to an insufficient number of RF units and poorly trained PF units. In the area of Territorial Security, funds and manpower have been allocated to numerous military and para-military agencies in an effort to achieve goals and quantity rather than quality. It is recommended that the many para-military units such as PSDF and PF units be disbanded and replaced by a small, well-trained and well-led military units-units that are equally capable of coping with the well-trained Viet Cong guerrilla units.

PSDF: The PSDF concept appears practical in theory, but not in practice. The remote Vietnamese farmers and merchants are not motivated nor are they convinced that a PSDF program will improve their day to day endeavors. Rather than helpful, they see it as being detrimental in that it causes them to spend time away from their fields and family for training and nightly ambush activities. In addition, many family members are VC or VCI causing a half-hearted effort to say the least. More important, once a villager becomes an active member of the PSDF he is subject to being targeted or harassed by the enemy without much hope of being protected by the GVN. As a result, the PSDF program has been generally unsatisfactory in this Province.

PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTORATE

National Police Field Force: The NPFF are simply another para-military organization that is characterized by poor leadership, training and total apathy towards mission accomplishment. Their alleged widespread activities of malfeasance has generally caused resentment towards the GVN rather than allegiance. It should be noted that military officers have been assigned as NPFF platoon leaders in recent months. Since that time, an improvement has been noted.

National Police Operations: Generally unsatisfactory with the exception of those in the Province capital. Again training and leadership are major problem areas. In addition, police personnel are composed of draft dodgers or those who are protecting draft dodgers. Nominal activities also result from the fact that the insecurity of this province does not allow for normal day to day operations.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Village Self-Development: The VSD program has not accomplished its stated goal of allowing the people to practice self-governing techniques. A very large sum has been poured into the program, but in only a few instances were the projects initiated by the people and voluntarily implemented. It is significant that

SECTION III (Cont)

almost no funds are ever contributed by the population. I suggest that this program be eliminated. Most projects are poorly built, poorly inspected, and poorly maintained and usually fall apart quickly.

Rural Development Cadre: The RD Cadre, in general, have performed well and have taken on the responsibility of the VSD program with minimum problems. During my tour they have never exceeded 40% of their authorized strength. This has forced them to be spread exceedingly thin and it is to their credit that they do as well as they have. Recommend that full strength be given more than cursory attention.

Ethnic Minorities: It is estimated that there are 5,000 to 7,000 Cambodians in the province. After the appointment of a representative no further activities have occurred in this program. In general, these people are rather well assimilated into the culture and do not have the language problem of other provinces. Recommend no further attention be given this program in this Province.

Local Government: Local government outside of the capital district tends to be rather poor. Village officials are of fair quality, but hamlet officials are generally quite bad. This is a result of the chronically bad or non-existent education facilities and lack of experience. Training of these officials in province is only fair. So few are ever trained in Vung Tau that this cannot be seriously considered. Elections have not always put qualified people into office; however, martial law has resulted in a significant number of inept officials being replaced by appointees. There has not been sufficient time to evaluate those officials, but an improvement is expected. A recent drive to train all officials has resulted in a very large increase in the number of people sent through the Province Training Center. This Center has not been too effective in the past, and this recent drive cannot be accurately evaluated at this time. Recommend that the training program continue to be heavily emphasized.

Aid in Kind: This type of funding has been useful for support of unforeseen problems. It should be continued.

REFUGEE DIRECTORATE

Refugees: The Refugee program has had a miserable record during my tour. Payments take from six months to a year to be made and have almost no impact. I suspect that many legitimate refugees do not bother to register. The development projects for the refugee sites are poorly selected and planned. Schools are constructed in areas that have some existing schools while other areas that have no educational opportunity at all have no schools planned. Recommend that the entire program be streamlined and that a maximum of thirty days be allowed for processing and paying refugees. Much of the delay comes from waiting for approvals from Saigon.

Social Welfare: This program suffers the same problems as the Refugee Program. Long, needless delays in assistance remove any impact that might have been made.

SECTION III (Cont)

Recommend that a time limit on processing be imposed and that more local initiative be allowed.

CHIEU HOI DIRECTORATE

Chieu Hoi: The Chieu Hoi program has been one of the brighter spots in the province. An Xuyen has been a leader in the number of Hoi Chanh almost from the time the program was started. In 1971 over 2,000 Hoi Chanh rallied. With the beginning of the April offensive the number dropped rapidly and has not recovered. A new Chieu Hoi Service Chief is expected soon-the third this year. The present one should be rated as only fair as he spends a great deal of time out of province. The recent drastic reduction in APTs has not helped the current situation. Recommend that the APT program be revitalized and that those cadre be assigned only to the Chieu Hoi Service.

REPORTS & ANALYSIS DIRECTORATE

Report Requirements: See comment in Section II, Question nine.

Report Feedback: Report feedback was more than adequate.

PHUNG HOANG DIRECTORATE

Phung Hoang: The ultimate success of the Phung Hoang Program to eliminate the VCI will be determined by how successful this program is conducted at district, the most critical level of VCI operations. A lack of command emphasis at district level and minimal participation by member agencies at both province and district levels have contributed to the relative ineffectiveness of this program. The exception is Thoi Binh District where the command emphasis exhibited by the District Chief as Chairman of the Phung Hoang Committee and the personal participation of his military staff and the officials of the GVN agencies who compose the membership of this committee is displayed in the true spirit of the Presidential Decree for Phung Hoang and its National Directives. The personal involvement by the Province Chief and his National Police (NP) Commander in recent months has resulted in significant improvements in the Phung Hoang program. Much remains to be done before this province establishes an effective Phung Hoang program as outlined in SOP #4. However, I believe that the personal participation displayed by the Province Chief and his NP Commander will serve to motivate everyone involved with this program in An Xuyen.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Health: The Public Health program is one of the worst in province. With 180 hamlets, An Xuyen has only one dispensary in each district, four in 18 functioning villages, and 19 in the 180 hamlets. Essentially there is no medical aid available except in the province capitol. The Public Health Doctor/population ratio is 1:310,000 and some 28 existing health facilities are not staffed. Many of those that are staffed are run as private clinics.

SECTION III (Cont)

Recommend that additional doctors be assigned to the province and that additional slots be allocated for training village/hamlet health cadre.

Education: Education is another of the worst programs in province. The schools rarely open on schedule and the teacher shortage is acute and long-standing. Requests for teachers are rarely filled and the 1972 school year began by enrolling some 3,000 less students than 1971. The number of empty schools and classrooms is difficult to report as many teachers only attend school for inspections and paydays. The Service Chief is inept and does not plan well. He is, however, due to retire in December. Recommend that An Xuyen be given a priority on teachers and that an exceptionally good replacement be sent for the Service Chief's position.

Public Works: The Public Works Service is well-trained and capable, but is severely hampered by equipment shortages. The "Province package" promised the province was given the last priority in Vietnam. Without equipment no improvement can be expected. Construction of any complexity is impossible and the service is barely able to maintain the present physical plants in province. Recommend that the Public Works Service be given additional equipment.

Economic Development: Although there is great potential for economic development in this province, few investors are willing to risk investing funds in an area as insecure as An Xuyen. Fishing, charcoal, and pineapples show especially good promise, but the LOCs are often subject to interdiction or taxation.

Land Reform: The Land Reform program has gone well and is extremely popular with the people and has had high impact with them. The program went very well in the more secure areas, but some problems are being encountered in attempting to implement the program in the remaining insecure areas.

Domestic Production: This province is an agricultural one and has consistently exported rice to other areas. However, it is not suited to large scale vegetable production and most other plant foods are imported. Fruits appear to be adequate for the demand and pork production allows exports. There are no cattle. Seafoods are comparatively cheap and abundant as long as the LOCs remain open. Improved rice strains are far more evident than 18 months ago and are expected to increase as irrigation improves.

Labor: There is a large unemployment problem here among unskilled workers and a shortage of skilled workers. There is no local labor union although unions of cyclo and other transportation workers exist. They are not very active and have been on strike only once in 18 months. The problem is essentially one of lack of jobs. As security increases and the number of investors also increases this problem should be alleviated somewhat.

Youth Affairs: The Youth Service Chief has very little funds and even fewer personnel. This service only functions in the capital city and is an additional duty at district levels and lower. It does a fair amount of work in the province town, but is inactive elsewhere. Recommend that additional cadre and funds be made available.

SECTION III (Cont)

Public Administration: See Local Government.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

PSYOPS: PSYOPS died a quiet death last year with the departure of the 21st Division. Most of the assets were withdrawn and the only capability left to PSYOPS is to send preprinted leaflets and posters to the operating bases. Occasionally, lectures are made to the troops and some ceremonies held, but the capability of functioning day to day is gone. Recommend assignment of one airplane, with broadcasting and leaflet drop capability, to this province.

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Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) HQ DA DAFD, Washington, D.C. 20310		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified
		2b. GROUP
3. REPORT TITLE Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL John P. King, Province Senior Advisor, An Xuyen Province, 12 Jun 71 - 12 Jan 73		
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates) Senior Officer Debriefing Report, 12 Jun 71 - 12 Jan 73		
5. AUTHORIS (First name, middle initial, last name) Colonel John P. King		
6. REPORT DATE 26 January 1973	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 14	7b. NO. OF REFS
8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.	8b. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) 73B002	
9. PROJECT NO. N/A	9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY HQ DA DAFD, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT		

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